

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended): An image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of image forming apparatuses via a network, ~~for transmitting an image signal representing an image that has been read to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses,~~ said image reading apparatus comprising:

generation means for generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image;

selection means for selecting one of ~~from~~ the plurality of image forming apparatuses for receipt of the generated image signal;

input instruction reception means for receiving an input instruction of user management information from the selected image forming apparatus;

determination means for determining whether or not ~~the selected image forming apparatus requests input of the input of the user management information relating to a user is necessary, in accordance with the received input instruction;~~

input control input means for controlling the input of inputting the user management information so as to be inputted in accordance with a the result of the determination by said determination means;

transmitting output means for transmitting outputting the inputted user

management information to the selected image forming apparatus;

reception means for receiving, from the selected image forming apparatus, a result of authenticating the transmitted management availability information for using from the selected image forming apparatus based on the output of the user management information; and

transmission control means for controlling transmission such that of the generated image signal is transmitted to the selected image forming apparatus, in accordance with the availability information received result of the authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus.

Claim 2. (currently amended): An image reading apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said transmission control means compresses the image signal prior to transmitting the image signal.

Claims 3 - 5. (canceled)

Claim 6. (currently amended): An image reading method for controlling an image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of image forming apparatuses via a network, transmitting an image signal representing an image that has been read to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses; said image reading method comprising the steps of:

generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image;

selecting one of from the plurality of image forming apparatuses for

receipt of the generated image signal;

receiving an input instruction of user management information from the selected image forming apparatus;

determining whether or not the selected image forming apparatus requests input of the input of the user management information relating to a user is necessary, in accordance with the received input instruction;

controlling the input of inputting the user management information so as to be inputted in accordance with a the result of the determination in said determining step;

transmitting outputting the inputted user management information to the selected image forming apparatus;

receiving from the selected image forming apparatus, a result of authenticating the transmitted management availability information for using from the selected image forming apparatus based on the output of the user management information; and

controlling transmission such that of the generated image signal is transmitted to the selected image forming apparatus, in accordance with the availability information received result of the authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus.

Claim 7. (previously presented): An image reading method according to Claim 6, wherein said control step includes compressing the image signal prior to transmitting the image signal.

Claims 8 - 14. (canceled)

Claim 15. (currently amended): A computer readable memory storing a program executing an image reading method for controlling an image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of image forming apparatuses via a network, ~~transmitting an image signal representing an image that has been read to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses~~; said program comprising:

code for generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image;

code for selecting one ~~of~~ from the plurality of image forming apparatuses for receipt of the generated image signal;

code for receiving an input instruction of user management information from the selected image forming apparatus;

~~code for determining whether or not the selected image forming apparatus requests input of the input of the user management information relating to a user is necessary, in accordance with the received input instruction;~~

~~code for controlling the input of inputting the user management information so as to be inputted in accordance with a the result of the determination by said determination code;~~

~~code for transmitting outputting the inputted user management information to the selected image forming apparatus;~~

~~code for receiving from the selected image apparatus, a result of authenticating the transmitted management availability information for using from the~~

selected image forming apparatus based on the output of the user management information;

and

code for controlling transmission such that of the generated image signal is transmitted to the selected image forming apparatus, in accordance with the availability information received result of the authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus.

Claim 16. (previously presented): A computer readable memory according to Claim 15, wherein said control code compresses the image signal prior to transmitting the image signal.

Claims 17 - 25. (canceled)

Claim 26. (previously presented): An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said selection means selects the image forming apparatus according to the generated image signal.

Claim 27. (previously presented): An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the management information includes at least a user ID, a division ID, or a title ID for the authentication determination at the selected image forming apparatus.

Claim 28 - 33. (canceled)